

Appendix B: Visual Impact Analysis and Renderings

B.1 Sensitive Viewpoints

AMI Trail. The AMI Trail is a bicycle/pedestrian path that runs between the Pocatello Zoo and the trailhead parking area off South 2nd Avenue. The bicycle trail passes through one of the few undeveloped areas remaining near Pocatello. Mature big sagebrush and native grasses surround the immediate foreground experienced from the path. Near the path's terminus on 2nd Avenue, it travels through a narrow and highly scenic basalt canyon that contains juniper trees, currants, and other native species. Because the trail traverses a heavily vegetated basalt terrace above the Portneuf River's floodplain, panoramic views of the south valley area and adjacent mountainous terrain are experienced from the path.

Residential Areas. The Indian Hills and Indian Creek subdivisions are two of the growing residential areas in the study corridor. Residents in these two subdivisions, especially those along the outer sections of each neighborhood, have foreground views of pastures, other residences, the Portneuf River, the UPRR yard and embankment, the basalt cliffs along 2nd Avenue, the Indian Hills Elementary School and soccer complex, and the Edson Fichter Nature Area. In the background, residents view the Pocatello foothills and the more distant Pocatello and Bannock Ranges.

Other residences located along Bannock Highway, in the foothills west of Bannock Highway, and near Shoshoni Trail have views similar to those from the Indian Hills area. Most foreground views include pastures, other residences, the Indian Hills Elementary School and soccer complex, the Edson Fichter Nature Area, and the Juniper Hills Country Club. Background views include the basalt cliffs west of I-15, the river and UPRR embankment, and the more distant Pocatello and Bannock Ranges. The area has a rural-residential character with essentially no commercial development present.

Residences within the South Park community are primarily located on the east side of South 5th Avenue near the 1-15 interchange. Foreground views are generally of short duration due to a background including either the basalt cliff face that parallels the west side of South 5th Avenue or the east foothills and Pocatello Range. Foreground views generally include other residences, Constitution (South) Park, and in some instances, commercial businesses along South 5th Avenue.

Edson Fichter Nature Area. The Edson Fichter Nature Area is located just south of the Cheyenne Avenue crossing between the Portneuf River and UPRR. The area includes an interpretive trail highlighting the area's wildlife, habitat, and fishery resources. Immediate foreground views include the river and its associated riparian vegetation, the UPRR embankment, pastures, residential areas, and the Indian Hills Elementary School and soccer complex. Background views include the basalt cliffs west of I-15, the foothills, and Pocatello and Bannock Ranges.

Juniper Hills Country Club. The Juniper Hills Country Club is a large complex with private residences, a golf course, tennis courts, and other facilities. The northwest end of the golf course abuts the Edson Fichter Nature Area and has views similar to those described for the Nature Area beyond the immediate foreground of the golf course. Currently, the golf course abuts a residential area to the southeast and pasture to the north and south. North and west of the country club, golfers view the Portneuf River, Edson Fichter Nature Area, and irrigated pasture in the immediate foreground. In the distance, the surrounding valley and mountains are visible.

Portneuf Greenway Trail. The Portneuf Greenway Trail runs along the Portneuf River through the north half of the corridor and ends near the Indian Creek subdivision. Within the study area, the trail runs along the river on a levee built for flood control. Foreground views to the west and south include pastures and the Indian Hills and Indian Creek subdivisions. Views to the east and north include the channelized river and its narrow band of riparian vegetation, the UPRR yard and embankment, South 2nd Avenue, the Edson Fichter Nature Area, and pastures. In the distance, I-15, basalt cliffs, surrounding foothills, and mountain ranges are visible.

South 2nd Avenue. Traveling southwest on South 2nd Avenue after Ross Park, panoramic views of the Portneuf River floodplain and south valley area dominate the landscape. Basalt cliffs dominate the foreground east of the roadway, and pastures and the Indian Hills Subdivision dominate views to the west. The surrounding foothills and mountains are visible in the distance.

Interstate 15. I-15 runs roughly southwest-northeast through the corridor. Motorists traveling on I-15 have long-range views as they travel through the study area. Panoramic views of the valley floor are visible to the southeast because the roadway sits at a higher elevation than the bottom of the valley floor. Views of pastures, residential areas, the Portneuf River, and scattered houses are visible from the interstate and are sensitive to change. Views to the northwest of the interstate are less sensitive to change. This area has experienced a larger amount of commercial development and retains less of its natural beauty than the

valley floor. At a distance, motorists have views of the surrounding foothills and mountain ranges.

B.2 Sensitive Viewpoint Impacts

B.2.1 Leo-Harper Alternative

AMI Trail. The west end of the fill and arterial leg constructed on the valley floor as well as the east end of the bridge abutment and arterial constructed on the basalt terrace above South 2nd Avenue would be visible from some mid-trail to lower-trail locations. The variable-depth slab bridge constructed over the AMI Trail would be visible from both middle and lower portions of the trail (Appendix D, Figure LH-5). Additionally, the two bridges constructed over I-15 would be visible from some mid-trail locations. Except at higher trail elevations, most of the completed arterial would not be visible because it would be cut into the basalt plateau that the bicycle trail crosses.

The project would not be visible along the upper trail segment due to big sagebrush obstructing long-range views of the project area or from where the lower trail segment passes through a small basalt canyon.

Residential Areas. Many Indian Hills and some Indian Creek residents would have an unobstructed view of the new arterial, bridge, and tie-in (Appendix D, Figure LH-3). The new five-lane roadway would dominate their immediate foreground view to the northwest. The new bridge and basalt rock cuts required for the arterial and tie-in would change the middle ground views of the valley and basalt cliff face along South 2nd Avenue.

Similarly, most residents in the foothills west of Bannock Highway as well as others in the immediate vicinity of the project (that is, Tech Farm Road and Leo Lane) would also have an unobstructed view of the project.

Residents near Shoshoni Trail and the Juniper Hills County Club would likely see in the distance only the new bridge crossing and upper leg of the arterial where it cuts into the basalt cliff face on South 2nd Avenue.

Views from the South Park area on South 5th Avenue would generally not be affected by the Leo-Harper Alternative.

Edson Fichter Nature Area. From the nature area, middle-ground views to the northwest would be affected by the bridge, the upper end of the fill leading up to the bridge crossing, and basalt cliff cuts required for the arterial and tie-in.

Juniper Hills Country Club. More distant views of the upper Portneuf Valley from this golf course would be only partially affected. From a few locations, the

new bridge crossing and upper leg of the arterial where it cuts into the basalt cliff face on South 2nd Avenue would be partially or wholly visible.

Portneuf Greenway Trail. North of Cheyenne Avenue, northward views from the trail would be dramatically changed. The large bridge associated with this alternative would pass directly overhead of trail users, and all or most of the arterial and tie-in would dominate views of the basalt cliffs and surrounding valley, respectively. Southward views across the south valley area would be unchanged after passing the arterial.

South of Cheyenne Avenue within the Edson Fichter Nature Area, northward views from the trail would be affected as described above for the nature area.

South 2nd Avenue. The new arterial and bridge crossing would be highly visible from South 2nd Avenue and would dramatically affect foreground views of the western valley floor below (Appendix D, Figure LH-4). South 2nd Avenue travelers would have an unobstructed view of the large bridge crossing and of the basalt cliff cuts associated with the bridge abutment and tie-in. For a short duration, the arterial would add a visual intrusion to the greater valley area and surrounding mountains.

Interstate 15. As motorists cross the I-15 bridges over the arterial, they would experience the new roadway below and its associated rock cuts in the immediate foreground on either side of the interstate (Appendix D, Figure LH-1). More distant views of the arterial from I-15 would be limited to the variable depth slab bridge constructed over the AMI Trail.

Views from the Leo-Harper Alternative and Tie-In

Arterial. Beginning at the arterial's western terminus on Bannock Highway, motorists and other users would experience an unobstructed view of open pastures, scattered residences, a golf course to the northwest, and the Indian Hills subdivision to the southeast. The arterial would then rise over the Portneuf River, UPRR yard, and South 2nd Avenue. From the bridge crossing and where the arterial tops the basalt cliffs on South 2nd Avenue, large panoramic vistas of the valley and surrounding mountains would dominate middle to distant views across the landscape similar to those experienced from the AMI Trail.

Beginning at the arterial's intersection with the tie-in, motorists and other users would experience an unobstructed panoramic view of short duration across a mature shrub-steppe ecosystem. After passing over the AMI Trail, views from the arterial would become canyon-like as the arterial drops below the existing ground level and heads toward I-15 and South 5th Avenue through a series of rock and soil cuts. Nearly vertical rock cuts about 30 feet high would line the

segment beneath the I-15 bridge crossings. The depth of these cuts would gradually lessen as one travels up-grade to the arterial's intersection with South 5th Avenue. Near the South 5th Avenue intersection, views of a disturbed early seral shrub-steppe ecosystem, residences, and commercial/industrial properties would dominate the immediate foreground. The foothills that flank the northeast side of the Portneuf Valley would dominate in the background.

Tie-In. Views from the tie-in would be of short duration and essentially limited on both sides of the roadway to the basalt rock cuts required. At its intersection with the tie-in, travelers would view the arterial and shrub-steppe plateau surrounding it.

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